

Weekly Column for March 9, 2006

One week ago today, City Police officers, with the help of New York State Investigators raided the Cinema Art Theater on River Street and shut the building down. We hope the business is gone for good.

It is not easy for me to say that. I'm a business first kind of guy. I like businesses being successful in our City, but there is an exception to that, and the Cinema Art Theater is that glaring exception.

Several months ago I received a letter from a woman in the City, detailing different types of illicit conduct taking place at the Cinema Art Theater. She wrote the letter because an ex-boyfriend, who remained a dear friend to her, had gotten involved in drugs, and this theater was helping him support his habit. It was a letter that touched my heart. I immediately sent the information to the Police Chief and asked him to look into the issue. It blossomed into a full-blown investigation that you saw the results of last week.

Over the course of the past week I have had numerous conversations with many different people about what took place there. The majority of them were pleased with the action that we took, and believe the downtown area will benefit from it. Others were not so convinced, though I do stress it was a small minority.

There were several people that openly complained that the activity occurring at the theater had been going on for quite some time and should have been stopped long ago. In a perfect world, sure, that would be the case. However, there is a large difference between rumor and innuendo, and actual fact. The letter I received from the brave woman concerned about her friend was a detailed account of what was happening. It was enough to allow law enforcement to seek a greater action.

My point here is clear. We have a great City here in Troy. It is a wonderful community with terrific people. It can be better, and we are working diligently to do just that. But the more help we receive, the quicker things get accomplished. If you know something, see something happen, call us. You need not even leave a name. Whether it is a crime, or a code violation, or trash on the street, all information is helpful.

It's one thing to say that everyone knows something was happening at such and such a place. It's another to pick up the phone and make a difference.

I urge you to make a difference. We are much stronger as one firm unit than a group divided. Have a great weekend.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy